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EARLY PREGNANCY AND PREGNANCY DIAGNOSIS

WHAT TO DO NOW?

After breeding, your bitch can resume her normal routine. Exercise is encouraged, so long as not excessive (hard road-work, jumps at maximal heights, dock-diving). I highly recommend avoiding events where a large number of dogs will congregate, such as dog shows. Attending the usual training classes, in a controlled environment of healthy dogs, is not usually a problem. Boarding is not recommended. I am concerned that if a potentially pregnant bitch contracts an infectious disease, she could lose her litter.

DIET

New information has led to the recommendation to change her diet either before or at least by the time of breeding to one that is AAFCO tested and is composed of: 27-34% protein, at least 18% fat, and 20-30% carbohydrate. I recommend discontinuing any nutritional or nutraceutical supplements.

PREGNANCY DIAGNOSIS BY ULTRASOUND - Not Just for Counting!

Ultrasound to detect pregnancy is 100% safe and is the very best method to determine fetal well-being. I usually conduct ultrasound exams 25-32 days after the last breeding day. This allows my best opportunity to estimate litter size and detect fetal heartbeats. After day 35, the fetal sacs enlarge and can over-lap, making an accurate count less likely. Other advantages of ultrasonography include diagnosis of fetal resorption, uterine disease, ovarian disease and urinary tract health.

RADIOGRAPHIC DIAGNOSIS OF PREGNANCY

Although fetal skeletons start to become apparent by day 45, an accurate head-count can only be performed during the last week of gestation. In some cases (especially very large litters) accuracy is not 100%. If not doing whelpwise, I highly recommend a late term x-ray to confirm head count and determine if any problems are apparent prior to whelping.

WHELPWISE BY PERINATAL VETERINARY SERVICES

This service provides equipment to monitor uterine contractions, fetal heart beats and is an excellent method to monitor whelping. Owners using this service can take advantage of the opportunity to have calcium and oxytocin on hand for safe use at home under the supervision of the Whelpwise staff (available 24/7). For more information: www.whelpwise.com or call 1-888-281-4867.



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BLOOD PREGNANCY TEST

The relaxin assay is a fairly reliable method to confirm pregnancy. Blood is drawn approximately 28-30 days after breeding. This test will not estimate litter size, and I have seen false results on occasion. Ultrasound remains your best method to evaluate early pregnancy.

C-SECTIONS

I am usually available 7 days per week for C-sections and, together with my excellent staff, provide a state-of-the-art experience for the bitch and owner. Elective C-sections can be scheduled at the ultrasound appointment. For emergency C-sections, if I can't be reached, another BRVC doctor may be able to help you. We are not available after-hours (before 8 am daily and after 10pm weekdays, 8pm weekends).

**PLEASE CALL THE BISHOP RANCH VETERINARY CENTER
(925-866-8387) to schedule exams.**